

February 25, 2021

RE: HB 6517

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Jaime Aulet and I live in Shelton, Connecticut. I fully support HB 6517, An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force to Analyze the Implementation of Laws Governing Dyslexia Instruction and Training. I submit my testimony as a parent who has advocated for my child for the past 3 years who was recently diagnosed as dyslexic in the 7th grade.

There were signs early on in my child's education that he was dyslexic - inability to rhyme words, forgetting how to spell words after a spelling test, poor spelling, skipping words while reading, not wanting to read aloud, confusing words that sound similar but have very different meanings (using the word envied instead of enjoyed). My son also has a genetic predisposition to dyslexia because my husband and his mother are both dyslexic. Even with all of this evidence, I was told by my public school district when he was in the 5th grade that he could not possibly be dyslexic. He was evaluated in the 2nd grade and again in the 5th by a school district and was told he did not have any academic issues. I finally took the school district to mediation (with the help of an advocate) to win Independent Educational Evaluations (IEEs).

As soon as the evaluator from LiteracyHow started working with my son, she knew he is dyslexic. It took her literally minutes to see something it took 3 years for our school district to recognize. I was also able to find a special education teacher who lives in my town but works in a different district to tutor him because he was not receiving help at school. She evaluated him during their first meeting is the Wilson evaluation and again it was obvious in minutes that he is dyslexic. It amazes me that 2 people with training knew so quickly, but no one in our school district saw it.

Consequently my gifted student began to believe in the 5th grade that he was dumb and no good. At this point he heard for almost 2 years that he was not motivated and not working hard enough, which took a large toll on his emotional well-being. Had he been diagnosed quickly, his experience in those grades would have been more positive and he wouldn't be learning Kindergarten level phonics in the 7th grade.

The special education teacher he has been assigned to has been trained in the Orton-Gillingham method, however there is no clear scope or sequence to what she is teaching him, nor does it seem she is covering the basics he really needs as outlined in the reports we received from his testing. His intervention has just begun, so I hold out hope that our district may remediate his dyslexia.

Parents should not need to spend hours educating themselves, nor should they need the help of 2 advocates to get any child diagnosed with dyslexia or any learning disorder. I believe this bill is a large step in the right direction for dyslexic students to receive the supports they need in Connecticut public schools.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaime Aulet